

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel Claims 15-28, amend Claims 10-13, and add new Claims 29-44 as follows

(a marked-up set of Claims as presently amended and added is attached hereto as Appendix B):

10. A process for producing a dimensionally stable pack made of cardboard, in particular a hinge-lid box for cigarettes, comprising the following sequential steps:

(a) providing a folding and sealing apparatus for folding and sealing the pack;
(b) providing the pack with an outer wrapper having folding tabs, the outer wrapper made of sealable film;

(c) folding the tabs of the outer wrapper into a region of tab overlap in a folding station of the folding and sealing apparatus;

(d) temporarily maintaining the tabs in the region of tab overlap by tacking or by tack connection;

(e) transporting the pack to a permanent sealing station; and

(f) fixedly maintaining the tabs in the permanent sealing station of the folding and sealing apparatus, the tabs being permanently sealed in the region of tab overlap by full-surface sealing.

11. The process according to Claim 10, wherein the step of temporarily maintaining the tabs in the region of tab overlap is by small surface-area spot sealing.

12. The process according to Claim 10, wherein the step of temporarily maintaining the tabs in the region of tab overlap is by small surface-area linear sealing.

13. The process according to Claim 10 further comprising the sequential step (g) of heat treating the outer wrapper to generate shrinkage of the outer wrapper.

29. The process according to Claim 10, wherein the step of temporarily maintaining the tabs in the region of tab overlap occurs in the folding station.

30. The process according to Claim 10, wherein the step of temporarily maintaining the tabs in the region of tab overlap occurs distant the folding station.

31. The process according to Claim 10, wherein the step of providing the pack with an outer wrapper is by folding a blank of film, the blank forming the outer wrapper around the pack in a tubular shape.

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32. A process for folding and sealing an outer wrapper on a dimensionally stable pack comprising the following steps:

providing a blank for forming the outer wrapper, the outer wrapper having side tabs and a second set of tabs;

folding the outer wrapper around the pack in a tubular shape such that the side tabs overlap one another in a region of side tab overlap;

temporarily maintaining the side tabs, the side tabs being temporarily maintained in the region of side tab overlap;

folding the second set of tabs of the outer wrapper in a region of second tab overlap;

temporarily maintaining the second set of tabs, the second set of tabs being temporarily maintained in the region of second tab overlap;

transporting the packs with the temporarily maintained tabs to a side tab permanent sealing assembly; and

fixedly maintaining the side tabs in the side tab permanent sealing assembly.

33. The process according to Claim 32, wherein the step of temporarily maintaining the side tabs in the region of side tab overlap is by spot sealing.

34. The process according to Claim 32, wherein the step of temporarily maintaining the side tabs in the region of side tab overlap is by a narrow sealing strip.

35. The process according to Claim 32, wherein the step of temporarily maintaining the second set of tabs is by short narrow tacking strips.

36. The process according to Claim 32, wherein the step of transporting the packs with the temporarily maintained tabs to a side tab permanent sealing assembly comprises moving the packs upward to a pack tower, and

wherein the step of fixedly maintaining the side tabs in the side tab permanent sealing assembly is by full-surface sealing in the pack tower.

37. The process according to Claim 36, further comprising the steps of:

transporting the packs with the fixedly maintained side tabs to a second tab permanent sealing assembly; and

fixedly maintaining the second set of tabs in the second tab permanent sealing assembly.

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38. The process according to Claim 37, wherein the step of transporting the packs with the fixedly maintained side tabs to a second tab permanent sealing assembly comprises moving the packs laterally to a sealing path, and

wherein the step of fixedly maintaining the second set of tabs in the second tab permanent sealing assembly is by full-surface sealing in the region of the sealing path.

39. The process according to Claim 38, further comprising the step of conveying the pack with fixedly maintained side and second tabs to a shrinking station, wherein the pack is subjected to a shrinking process for the outer wrapper by means of surface heat transfer.

40. The process according to Claim 32, further comprising the steps of:
inserting the pack in a pocket of a folding turret such that the side tabs overlap one another in the region of side tab overlap;

pushing the packs out of the folding turret;

upwardly moving the packs into an upright tower wherein the side tabs are fixedly maintained; and

laterally moving the packs into a sealing path wherein the second set of tabs are fixedly maintained.

41. An apparatus for folding and sealing an outer wrapper on a dimensionally stable pack, the outer wrapper having side tabs and at least one other set tabs being either or both end and base tabs, the apparatus comprising:

a first folding station for folding the outer wrapper around the packs;

a second folding station for folding the side tabs of the outer wrapper into a region of side tab overlap;

a first tacking station for temporarily maintaining the side tabs in the region of side tab overlap;

a third folding station for folding the at least one other set of tabs of the outer wrapper in a region of other set of tab overlap; and

a second tacking station for temporarily maintaining the at least one other set of tabs in the region of other set of tab overlap.

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42. The apparatus of Claim 41, further comprising:
a horizontal pack path on which spaced apart packs are conveyed to the first folding station;
a blank unit to supply a continuous material web of outer wrapper; and
a sealing assembly for fixedly maintaining at least one of the sets of tabs in the region of tab overlap.

43. The apparatus of Claim 41, wherein the first folding station folds the outer wrapper around the packs in the form of a U-shape;
wherein the second folding station includes a folding turret with a plurality of pockets, each pocket for receiving a pack with outer wrapper;
wherein the first tacking station includes a heated tacking element and sealing tools;
wherein the third folding station includes a fixed folding finger and folding diverters; and
wherein the second tacking station includes spaced-apart tacking jaws.

44. The apparatus of Claim 42, further comprising a shrinking station, wherein the packs transported from the sealing assembly are subjected to thermal treatment for the purpose of shrinking the outer wrapper.